

ferred to the public at a trifle, there is no one who may not become a Bible student. Promiscuous reading is giving place to systematic study, and this tendency is being constantly augmented by chautauquas and Bible institutes.

In a brief article one can only touch upon a few methods of study. Torrey, Moody and other "giants in the Scriptures" have written valuable works on the subject.

I believe in every one as far as possible doing his own reading and thinking. I want to see people able to take a position and intelligently defend it and say "this is true" not because "our Minister said it," but because "I can prove it."

In our work at Warsaw, once each month instead of a sermon we have a Bible Normal lesson and once a month a Bible reading.

I want to briefly speak of several ways of Bible study I have found helpful so far as my limited experience goes.

1. The old way of simply opening the book and reading it is good if one has not time for a better. Continuous reading is better than promiscuous. One should always get their bearings before proceeding. For example, I have known some to stumble over I Cor. 12:25, and other passages because they did not study the context.

2. If one has the time and persistence the most complete way is to take it book by book. Study the life of the author, the circumstances and purpose of the writing. Read the book six or eight times, and then make an outline of the events recorded and the teachings on the various subjects treated. Make heads and sub-heads. This method is rather difficult, but there is no royal road to proficiency in anything.

3. If one will make a special study of the different scripture *types* he will be surprised at the light it will throw upon the progress of revelation, and the relation between the old and the new dispensations,—a point which confuses many.

4. With a subject index one can make an interesting and profitable study of *biographies*. Read John 1:35-48, and 12:20-23, and see the character of Philip and Andrew. Take Abraham or Joseph or Nehemiah or any character and collect all the references to them and you will get many new glimpses of their character.

5. One of the most fruitful and practical ways is the topic method. Take some subject, as the atonement, the Sabbath, grace, Christian living, love, faith, repentance, sin, etc., and by means of concordance, subject-index and cross-

references find all the texts bearing on the subject and arrange them.

This allows the Bible to interpret itself largely and prevents the narrowness which comes from isolating a passage and making a hobby of it.

Take certain words such as remember, beware, etc., and collect choice passages in which they are used.

Study doctrines and the ordinances in this way. One ought to know what he believes and why he believes it. A lady who has been a church member for years confessed this winter that she never read the 13th of John.

6. One needs to go to the word often for their own personal comfort. In bereavement, in joy, in perplexity and despair one will find something to cheer and inspire. It has been said that in the Psalms alone, "there is a balm for every heart-ache and a fitting expression for every emotion that stirs the soul."

When you find a good passage label it, "for trouble," "for sickness," for business," etc.

7. I am a great believer in personal work. I want a religion with "go" in it. "Go ye out and constrain them." Now in doing personal work one meets all sorts of people with all sorts of excuses,— "I am good enough," "Too many hypocrites," "Mean to after awhile," etc., etc. Now you must be ready to nail every objection by a thrust from the word. Make a list of the excuses offered, and hunt up choice passages to meet each one. Make additions as experience grows. Study Christ and the apostles as personal workers. See how they dealt with doubt, with moral men, with hypocrites and sinners.

There are many other ways. Some study the Bible for the history in it, and some for the ethnology. Students at West Point study it to learn the military tactics of Joshua and David. Some study it for its language and style; some for ideas and poetry, and some that they may vaunt themselves and cavil.

One cannot understand nor appreciate the Bible aright without knowing contemporaneous history, the circumstances and purpose of the book he is reading and its connection with the whole. I have no sympathy with the illiterate who assumes that his interpretation of Scripture is infallible. I hate bigotry, tho it hide under the mantle of orthodoxy. A certain minister said to me, "I read no book but my Bible," and I surmise that that is one reason he does not know his Bible.

Again, it pays to be systematic, and to outline and record work done. Often satan may be routed by a dart from the

word if we have it at hand in our quiver. Often we must put our finger on a text to prove some doctrinal position. Often we long for a message to speak to the weak or discouraged. In the word there is something for everyone, and every time, and I have found it helpful to cover all the blank pages of the book with short Bible readings,—references covering every doctrine, the work of the Holy Spirit, the duty of the Christian under various circumstances, texts for personal workers, etc., etc. There are many helpful rules and suggestions, but space forbids details or examples.

One needs the best Bible he can get, one for daily use not for ornament. Don't be afraid to mark it. Fill all the margins. The marks will make it valuable for you. I use different kinds of marks for different kinds of passages.

Let me close by urging the thought upon all who may read this article, that what we get out of anything depends very largely upon what we put into it. One's circumstances and opportunities must determine in a measure his method of study but out of no method can he secure truth unless conscientiously and without bias he searches for truth. One can read into a passage about what he pleases. I have heard Acts 9:18, quoted as conclusive proof that Paul was baptized standing.

Be prayerful. "If any of you lack wisdom let him ask of God." James 1:5. The Spirit teaches spiritual things not to the high and mighty, wise and prudent, but to *spiritual* men. I Cor, 2:13. (R. V.)

"The Christian on his knees can see farther than the unbeliever with his telescope."

One cannot be spiritual without being obedient.

"He that willeth to do his will shall know of the doctrine." Jno. 7:17.

"We ask and we receive of him because we keep his commandments and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." I John 3:22. C. F. YODER.

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE.—NO. 4.

The tutor of a certain young prince once told him that there was no "royal road" to geometry. So there is none to Bible study. Any plan that doesn't have hours of patient *study* in its program is sure to prove a failure.

The deplorable ignorance of the Bible among the Christians is potent to every pastor and religious worker.

I believe it can be said to be the most fruitful source of backsliding, and is often the entering wedge that separates many a young and earnest follower from God and